



## **Transportation Finance Issues: Highway maintenance**

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### **What's the status of the highway maintenance budget?**

#### **Spending needs are up; funding is down**

- The maintenance budget has lost purchasing power. Adjusted for inflation, the maintenance budget has gone up just 4.4% over the last 10 years.
- The Legislature provided a 2.7% increase (plus a one-time \$3.5 million to replenish salt reserves) for 2002 and a 1.8% increase for 2003 for a total 2001-03 biennial budget of \$358 million for state highway maintenance and operations.
- The Legislature added intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to the maintenance budget. ITS includes things like ramp meters, message boards, monitoring cameras and freeway patrols.
- The Legislature provided a one-time allocation of \$27 million for the added activities with no funding for subsequent years. The Joint Finance Committee approved an additional \$10 million to help cover shortages in 2003.
- The maintenance budget has also been strained in past years due to severe winter weather, salt shortages, high fuel costs and spring flooding.

#### **Mild winters bring some savings**

- County crews used the mild winters to catch up on maintenance items that didn't get done in previous years. Crews have been busy:
  - Trimming trees and brush to eliminate safety hazards
  - Repairing deteriorated inlets and drainage structures
  - Cleaning catch basins and roadside ditches
  - Maintaining bridges
  - Filling potholes, pavement cracks and sealing joints
  - Repairing paved shoulders and grading gravel shoulders
  - Repairing or replacing signs, beam guards and security fences